

Nantwich Museum

The Battle of Nantwich 1644



HOW IT ALL BEGAN...

KING CHARLES THE FIRST

- ART LOVER
- MARRIED TO A CATHOLIC
- BELIEVED HE WAS ONLY RESPONSIBLE TO GOD
- STUBBORN

HIS DEMANDS FOR MONEY AND SUPPORT FOR THE ENGLISH CHURCH MADE HIM DISTRUSTED

THE COUNTRY WAS DIVIDED!

OLIVER CROMWELL M.P.

- A RADICAL PURITAN
- BELIEVED THE KING SHOULD RULE ONLY WITH THE CONSENT OF PARLIAMENT
- STUBBORN AND RUTHLESS

TO PURITANS, THE KING'S SUPPORT OF THE CHURCH LOOKED LIKE A RETURN TO THE OLD CATHOLIC RELIGION.

January **1643**

SIR WILLIAM BRERETON DEFEATED A ROYALIST FORCE IN A SKIRMISH NEAR CHURCHE'S MANSION. NANTWICH WAS IN PARLIAMENTARY HANDS ...

NANTWICH WAS NOW FORTIFIED BY DITCHES AND EARTHWORKS. IT BECAME THE CENTRE OF PARLIAMENTARY OPERATIONS IN CHESHIRE

MEANWHILE...

NOVEMBER 1643

A ROYALIST ARMY FROM IRELAND

LORD BYRON'S ARMY SETS ABOUT HARRASSING PARLIAMENTARIANS

CHESTER (ROYALIST)

ON CHRISTMAS EVE 1643 12 VILLAGERS KILLED AT BARTHOMLEY

SO BY THE END OF 1643 NANTWICH IS ISOLATED AND UNDER SEIGE!!

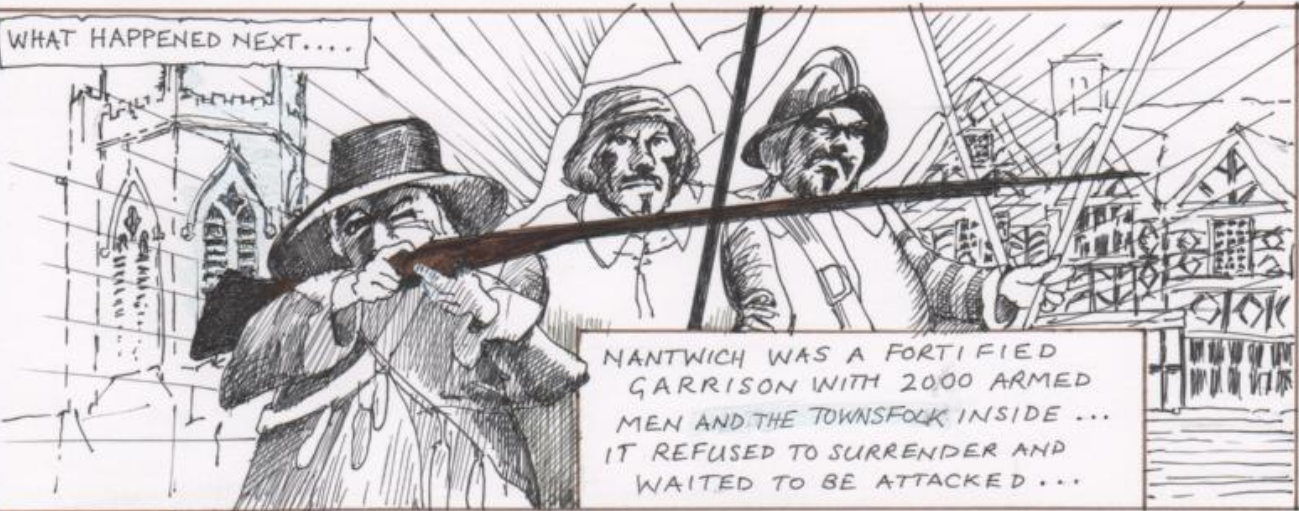
BEESTON CASTLE NANTWICH BARTHOMLEY

UNDER COVER OF DARKNESS THOMAS SANDFORD AND 8 FIRELOCKS SCALE THE RAMPARTS AND TAKE BEESTON CASTLE FOR THE ROYALISTS

DECEMBER 13 1643

BEESTON COMMANDER CAPTAIN STEELE RETIRED TO NANTWICH AND WAS LATER EXECUTED FOR COWARDICE

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT....



NANTWICH WAS A FORTIFIED GARRISON WITH 2000 ARMED MEN AND THE TOWNSFOLK INSIDE ... IT REFUSED TO SURRENDER AND WAITED TO BE ATTACKED ...

10 January 1644

ROYALIST ARTILLERY SET HOUSES IN WELSH ROW ON FIRE THE WOMENFOLK PUT THE FIRES OUT - ONE IS KILLED



18 January 1644

NANTWICH IS ATTACKED AT 5 DIFFERENT POINTS ... BUT THE GARRISON HELD



HELP WAS ON THE WAY SIR THOMAS FAIRFAX

WAS ORDERED TO CROSS THE PENNINES IN MIDWINTER TO RAISE THE SEIGE



THE ROYALISTS LOST 500 MEN ONLY 3 OF THE NANTWICH GARRISON WERE KILLED

IN THE SEVERE WINTERS OF THE 1640s ARMIES USUALLY STAYED IN WINTER QUARTERS.

THE BATTLE FOR NANTWICH BEGINS

24
January
1644



BYRON IS ANXIOUS TO ENTER NANTWICH BEFORE FAIRFAX ARRIVES. HIS ARMY IS DEMORALISED BY THE LOSSES OF JANUARY 18 AND A HARSH WINTER CAMPED OUTSIDE THE TOWN

FAIRFAX IS NOW IN DELAMERE FOREST HE EXPECTS BYRON'S ARMY TO BE LARGER AND MORE BATTLE-HARDENED THAN HIS OWN. HE HOPES TO LIFT THE SEIGE WITHOUT ENGAGING THE ENEMY



25
January
1644
morning



BYRON HAD SENT HIS CAVALRY EAST, CROSSING THE WEAVER AT BEAMBRIDGE. A SUDDEN THAW AND HEAVY RAIN ON THE PREVIOUS NIGHT SWEEPED THE BRIDGE AWAY... BYRON'S ARMY WAS SPLIT IN TWO



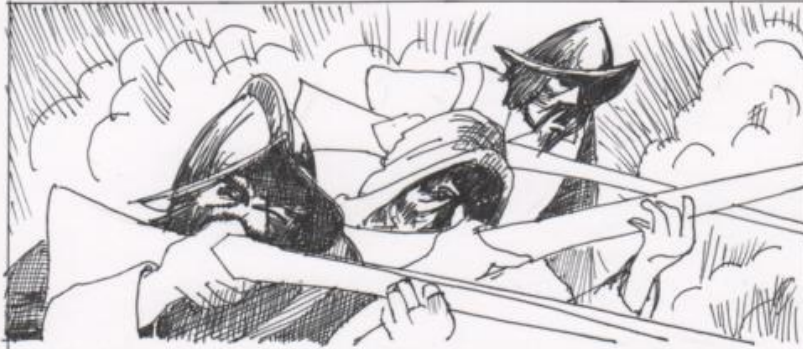
2pm
THE ROYALISTS MUSTER ROUND ACTON CHURCH



FORCED TO FACE THE ENEMY FAIRFAX'S FORCES ADVANCE...

THE BATTLE BEGINS!





AT A CRUCIAL MOMENT IN THE BATTLE ABOUT 800 MUKETEERS FROM THE NANTWICH GARRISON INTERVENE. THE ROYALIST CENTRE GIVES WAY AND THE BATTLE IS LOST... BYRON'S CAVALRY, INEFFECTIVE BECAUSE OF LATE ARRIVAL, NARROW LANES AND HIGH HEDGES, RETREAT TO CHESTER



MEANWHILE



COLONEL GIBSON SURRENDERS TO SIR THOMAS FAIRFAX



1500 PRISONERS ARE TAKEN. MANY CHANGED SIDES

THE PARLIAMENTARIANS SOUGHT TO MAKE PROPOGANDA OUT OF THE VICTORY...

... NEWSPAPERS AND PAMPHLETS CARRIED REPORTS THAT AMONG THE PRISONERS WERE...

150 WOMEN WITH LONG KNIVES !!



TO CELEBRATE THE LIFTING OF THE SEIGE TOWNSFOLK PUT HOLLY IN THEIR HATS



NANTWICH STILL CELEBRATES HOLLY HOLY DAY EACH JANUARY

The museum is open Tuesday to Saturday between 10.30am and 4.30pm.

The Museum is a Registered Charity (No. 509386) and does not charge for admission. Donations are welcome, see <https://nantwichmuseum.org.uk/donations>

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